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*FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, ANTICHRIST, SUPERMAN,  
AND PRAGMATIST*

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One of the most striking and pathetic figures of the nineteenth century was Friedrich Nietzsche. A radical aristocrat, a radical enemy of religion, a prophet, he shared the fate of the prophet and the radical man. He was a poet rather than a philosopher, not one calmly to weigh the issues of his mind. He was a zealot with a mission, a fiery genius, whose torch, unsteady at times, flared into madness in his latter years. So great was the strain of thought that his mind was literally consumed by his zeal for a vast, a revolutionary cause.

The events of his life were few. A series of ministers' families had intermarried for two generations; Nietzsche's father was a minister, and his mother the daughter of a minister. As in the case of our own Emerson, the family of Friedrich Nietzsche was thus one in which the intellectual life had predominated for several generations. At Röcken, a little German town not far from the battlefield of Lützen, on Oct. 15, 1844, Friedrich was born. His mother took complete charge of his instruction up to the time when he was sent to the so-called Fürstenschule at Pforta in the Thuringian mountains. After graduation there he continued his studies for some years at the Universities of Bonn and Leipzig. Ritschl was the dominating factor in his life at Leipzig, as Heinze had been at Pforta. The latter, still professor of philosophy at Leipzig, told me that Friedrich Nietzsche excelled in whatever field of work he set his heart on, though there was nothing to mark him as a genius save his taciturnity, his love of the beautiful, his hatred of the vulgar.

As a student, he had already distinguished himself as a master of the ancient languages and as a musician, and by virtue of certain essays he had published while an undergraduate the University

of Basel offered him an extraordinary-professorship of philology. He was then twenty-five. But languages were not his chief interest; and the publication of his first larger work on Greek tragedy proved that he was destined to be a thinker on the ultimate problems of life. His ten years as professor at Basel (1869-1879) were a continuous inner struggle. The teaching of language militated against the will which bade him think upon subjects of life and death; ill health limited a pen which seemed inexhaustible; and among his one-time friends the feeling against his radical theories left him standing more and more alone. The students worshipped him at first, but when they learned of his revolutionary principles, left him to lecture to vacant seats. He broke with his best friends—among whom was Richard Wagner—for the sake of his theories; and finally, well-nigh alone and friendless, broken in health at thirty-five, he resigned his professorship, accepting, however, a pension from the University. From this date until his death eight years ago the story of his life is that of a wandering thinker—*fugitivus errans* he called himself—alone, save for his faithful dog; now on the heights of Swiss mountains, now among the Italian lakes, now in the misty north of Germany; indefatigable, producing work after work with a golden pen, prophetic in tone, but, alas, often philosophically illogical, contradictory, absurd.

A few of the more important of his writings may be mentioned here. First in point of significance is his *Also sprach Zarathustra; ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Zarathustra is, of course, Zoroaster, and the mouth-piece of the writer himself. The book is written in a style of rare beauty, very much in the tone of the Biblical prophets, only the call is to objects wholly earthly. Secondly, *Menschliches, allzu Menschliches; ein Buch für freie Geister*, which consists, as does *Zarathustra*, very largely of aphorisms. *Morgenröte* and *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* tell of the dawn of a new science and new values; while *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, the most logical and consistent of the works I have read, seeks to advance, as the title indicates, beyond the concepts of a traditional ethics. *Der Antichrist* summarizes in relatively the most connected manner his objections to the Christian religion. Theologians and metaphysicians alike are warred upon; the doctrines

of the New Testament are discussed from a cultural, biological standpoint, and found wanting. Finally, *Der Wille zur Macht*, in which is contained a kind of will-metaphysic and a Pythagorean theory of the eternal recurrence of what has been. Philosophy was to Nietzsche largely personal experience. And if our thinking, like our bodies, is subject to evolution, it must show a growth, an overcoming of the old self, a rising to a new and broader field of vision. Thus we may in a measure forgive many of the seeming inconsistencies.

Ten years, then, as a professor in Basel, ten years as a wandering thinker, impelled as it were by fate, until, in 1889, he was picked up in the streets of Turin, hopelessly insane. He had overworked his brain in ceaseless thinking night and day, and to his death, in 1900, he had to be cared for by Christian charity—Christian charity, which in health had been the object of his bitterest attack. He was buried without funeral rites, save for one German student who came from afar and made an oration at his grave.

How was it now that Nietzsche so soon became a leader, for many, indeed, a prophet? How is it that no one who now considers problems of government, morality, or religion, can escape him?

Let us examine the chief elements of his philosophy, presenting so far as we may that which was true for him throughout, and more particularly his later thought. First, let us note that, as in the case of Socrates, Nietzsche's whole philosophy centres about ethics. The adage, *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, is again proposed, not through ethics to attain a new basis for philosophic thought, but, as it were, by ethics of a radical kind to rise superior to the ultimate problems which so trouble us. Man's concerns are of this earth; what has he to do with other worlds? Let him look to this life and make the most of it. The study of man is thus the paramount issue, to find in man himself not only the explanation of psychological fact, but a solution for all the phases of thought and action; in other words, to explain the various systems of philosophy, the religions of mankind, as well as our own ideas and ideals of morality, by a scientific, historical, and psychological method; presuming nothing, and rigidly excluding what seems improbable in our own immediate personal experience. "All that

we need is a chemistry of moral, religious, aesthetic concepts," says Nietzsche; and in an attempt to provide such an analysis he comes to the conclusion that metaphysics concerns itself with a world of dreams. Dreams are, indeed, sufficient to explain for him the origin of metaphysics. "Without dreams, one would never have found occasion to separate the real world from another world." So the division of human beings into body and soul—another dream—started the religious concepts of philosophy, and brought men from ghosts to spiritual essences, spiritual bodies, other lives than the present. Thus, as it were by inspiration, he tries to shut the gates of mercy on all metaphysics. He deliberately denies the validity and significance of the very problems and concepts of transcendental philosophy. God is dead, he boldly exclaims, there are no things in themselves, souls, world orders, *logoi*, paracletes. These are none of them given in experience; therefore they do not exist.

What concerns us, then, is man as a developing being in the present, as possibly a higher type in future generations. Thus it came that Nietzsche's first investigations, growing out of his philological studies—principally Greek—were, broadly speaking, cultural, going back almost invariably to Greek ideals. The Greeks were pre-eminently the people of freedom, each man a positive force, every life its own life, every will its own. They rose to native dignity as men, a type with which no later civilization can be compared. Rejoicing in the present, physically and intellectually free spirits, without the shackles of any presupposition or bias whatsoever, fearing nothing, with an art which assuaged the soul by true nobility and rose to Dionysiac exaltation, to intoxication of beauty and delight.

Nietzsche considers this an ideal to which we must return if the human race is to advance; and Schopenhauer, as the great exponent of dominant will, is to him the one who can teach men anew this principle of individuation, this positing of one's own will and carrying it through to the end. Schopenhauer, as is well known, found the principle at the basis of all being and action, not in intelligence and love, as the theologians maintained, but in a blind will, akin to the wills we find within ourselves. Finding all nature motivated by this stupid, unreasoning, blind force,

Schopenhauer proposed as man's best solution, in a world as miserable as a world could possibly be, the overcoming, the subjection of that force. Subjectively, Schopenhauer's solution, as we all know, was the ideal of negation, the Buddhist's Nirvana, the willing not to will. At this point Nietzsche breaks with his master. He is for overcoming a will which is blind—we can also say, a character which has no ends and aims—not for the purpose of attaining Nirvana, but, on the contrary, that we may develop our dead selves to stronger personalities by the effort and struggle to assert ourselves physically, intellectually, and morally as higher types of men.

Here we meet with the central concept, the watchword of the Nietzschean philosophy, Superman, or Overman—*Uebermensch*. It was Goethe who coined the word, but Nietzsche has made it pregnant with possibility; indeed, it might well become the object of religion if we are eventually to be reduced to a merely moral religion, the positivist's concept of a glorified humanity.

Who, now, is the Overman? He is, as the word implies, a being higher than anything to which mankind has yet attained or will attain, physically, intellectually, and morally. He is the ever retreating limit of evolution. He is the sense and salt of the earth. He is the one for whom all mankind must live and die. He is the distinguished aristocrat, of extraordinary power and ability, who moulds the destiny of men at large. He gives tone, direction, dignity, and ends to society. He is the head, we are the members; and we exist only to further that head.

But have we not leaders who give tone, direction, dignity, and ends to society? And is not mankind evolving from higher to higher planes? No, replies our philosopher, we are like sheep without a shepherd, without purposes and ends. Ask men what is the purpose of their lives, and see how many will find one there at all! Indeed, so wholly sapless and devoid of meaning seems this present life that they look to a future world to make up for the senselessness of earthly life. No, men are like sheep without a shepherd, says our philosopher; and, moreover, they will not have any shepherd. Let a man of higher type arise among them, a man physically and intellectually superior, what is the attitude of men at large toward him? Will they allow him to carry out

exalted purposes, will they recognize his leadership? No, the whole tendency of our democratic times is to make men like one another, to look upon all men as equal, to keep all on the same level, and see to it that no man obtains predominating influence or expresses his genius.

Thus Nietzsche was the arch-enemy of democratic institutions. For him, they detracted from the dignity of life, and reduced its higher values to mere commonplace, to vulgarity. One rabble beckons to another, and, though a god were to appear among them, they would still beckon one to the other, "We are all equal." They are flies in the market-place, exclaims Nietzsche, they suck the blood of him who comes from the mountains, they crucify him who speaks of higher values. There are no higher men, there can be no genius, say they who will not recognize the principle of distinguished leadership, who have lost all sense of personality and individuality. Democracy can be but a spiritless dead level, a feeble mediocrity.

It thus behooves the Superman and him who loves the Superman to leave the market-place and find himself a higher sphere. Let the Superman assert his will and carry out his ends and purposes. Thus only can the dead level of mediocrity be overcome. May those who can, rise, and in the struggle let the strongest survive; only thus can weakness be done away with! In the strongest possible words Nietzsche calls upon his followers—of whom there were none at that time—to create some high purpose, some end for human life, something that shall arouse the enthusiasm of men and make them content with an earthly destiny. He believes the rearing of supermen to be the end in which all men should find their Dionysiac delight. Then would earth have a sense, a meaning.

But how about those who are not supermen—how about us? we instinctively inquire. Nietzsche's bold response is this: Every man his own neighbor. I am not my brother's keeper. Let every man work out his own salvation. Let us have the struggle and the combat. Then the weak will die, and those who yearn for other worlds. And yet all men should seek to foster that which might enslave them. Again instinctively we ask, Should not the Superman be bullet-proof?

But perhaps we are too concrete here. It is in an ethical sense, primarily, that Nietzsche speaks to us; and his emphasis of the higher man, the man, that is, who asserts his individuality, is an attack upon traditional concepts of morality. He desires to present new tables of evolutionary law, at least to have them reckoned with, and so release mankind perhaps from the shackles of convention and mere tradition. His evolutionary law is indeed revolutionary law. For him moral sanctions become a function of will—individual will—the exact antipode of Kant's categorical imperative. Spinoza anticipates him here: "According to the highest right of Nature, it is permitted to every man unconditionally to do that which according to his judgment will result in his own benefit."<sup>1</sup> Again, "To attain that which will redound to our own salvation and peace, we have need of no other principle than that we consider well what redounds to our own advantage."<sup>2</sup> And yet the deductions of Spinoza are quite different, as we shall see, since to him natural law and ethical law are both phases of the divine law.<sup>3</sup>

Nietzsche reasons thus: There was a time when men were physical slaves, bodily subject to masters. And though they overcame the fleshly bondage, they remained for many centuries intellectual slaves—scholastics of the Middle Age, bearing the yoke of a traditional philosophy. The time came when men awakened to find themselves free in mind as well—that was the renaissance of free thought, the dawning anew of a Greek ideal. But the process has not yet reached its conclusion; for we are still under the bondage of moral despotism, not having learned that our moral sanctions are themselves the products of our own minds. It is we ourselves who create the concepts good and evil. Therefore, they cannot have fixed values, and there are theoretically as many concepts, good and evil, as there are individuals. What, then, can hinder the establishment of new values for the categories good, right, etc.? Why not overturn the old evaluations of men's actions and set new standards, which may be more natural, and so contribute to the advancement of the race, particularly of its higher

<sup>1</sup>Ethica, Part iv, App. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Concerning True Freedom.

<sup>3</sup>Of Natural Right.



type? This "*Umwertung aller Werte*" is what Nietzsche then attempts to do, deliberately setting aside public opinion, and challenging every ideal whatsoever, boldly proclaiming new standards and new ideals. The development of a higher type of man, and the overturning of what he is pleased to call this rabble-life of the present age, becomes for him a sort of holy zeal, a religion.

We all know that his main object here was to overturn, if possible, what he considered the effete ethical concepts of traditional Christianity. The system, he maintains, is one which grew out of Asiatic despotism, and contrasts with Greek enlightenment and the cultivation of virtue as its own filthy Jewish rags compare with the unspotted brightness of the unclouded heavens. The fundamental fallacy of the Christian ethics is to him its negation of the individual, its denial of the essentially human. If virtue is but filthy rags, and there is no cleanliness in us, how can we exult in earth and sky and the free play of every bodily function? If we must ever deny ourselves, how can the individual evolve? If our highest moral obligation becomes service, it cannot but result in servility, limitation, degradation. Altruism is thus a disease, and all its negative virtues are held to thwart the progress of evolution. The new and higher type of man will therefore never will to pity his fellow. 'Tis charity, and weakens him who gives and him who takes. The Superman will unlearn the idea of sacrifice, which degrades both giver and recipient. He, the rich in spirit, will not impoverish himself that the weak, the halt, the blind, the poor in spirit, the aimless, may drag themselves through an aimless existence. He will be strong and demand strength, thus inciting all to rouse themselves out of lazy weakness and moral beggary. He will resist evil—that is, whatever militates against his own higher development; never for one moment will he cease to raise himself, if possible, above his own dead self. Morally, then, the Superman will be his own self-sufficient arbiter, he will express his nature to the full, he will posit his own personality. He will posit his reason, and develop to the full every mental faculty. Here, too, he will rejoice in strength, he will accept no conditions, he will find that inner life and end in itself. Physically, he will strive to become like the "*blonde Bestie*" of the old German forests, with a body undaunted

by heat and cold, at home on land or sea, exulting in every natural function, every organ of his frame ruddy with life.

Let me, at this point, quote from the *Morgenröte*, by way of anticipating perhaps a serious criticism. The Superman as the type of the egoist, the "blond beast," who travels with inevitable will, devoid of sympathy or charity, with virtues all of his own making, has in him something to inspire fear. In justice to Nietzsche, however, we must remember that as a radical thinker he sought constantly to emphasize his thoughts by striking presentation. If, for instance, instead of calling the physical side of his Superman "*die blonde Bestie*," he had, with Hegel, spoken of an "approximate degree of bodily health which should enable a man to sustain a high degree of development, with consistent co-ordination of mind and physical functions," there would have been less discussion of the subject. Before we pass judgment, therefore, let us take into consideration Nietzsche's conception of the way the Superman would come to the end of his earthly course. He is comparing him with a bird of passage flying over the Western sea:

All these keen birds that fly afar to the farthest coast, surely somewhere they will be able to go no more, and they will limp down upon a mast or some barren cliff and be thankful for the support. But who can say that ahead of them, beyond them, there is not a free, a boundless course—that they have flown as far as they can fly? All our great masters and forerunners came to a stand, and it is not the noblest nor the most gracious mien with which fatigue stands still. So it will go with me and you. But how can that concern us? Other birds will fly beyond. And this our insight, our faith, flies in a race with them upwards and onwards; this our faith rises straight above our head and above its helplessness, it gazes out from thence into the distance and sees the hosts of far mightier birds, mightier than we are, who are going to strive for the same goal whither we sought to fly, and where all is yet sea, sea, sea.

If now the question presents itself, How about the advent of a second Superman, or perhaps a confederation of weaker wills for self-protection? we shall have to make allowance for a measure of justifiable hyperbole. For Nietzsche speaks here of slaves and masters, and of a master-morality and a slave-morality.

So great was his zeal for development that to him the Superman becomes the goal to which all nature turns. As the human species, the highest exemplification of life, depends for its sustenance upon the lower creation of animal and plant life, so it becomes a necessary correlate that the lower races of mankind should become subordinate to the purposes of those who stand for exalted ideals. The masses of mankind, the rabble, can be only a means to an end. And thus the beginning of a new era will see, first of all, a greater importance placed upon the highest types of men, and the factors that make for progress will not be sacrificed for the weak-minded, the mediocre, the halt, and those who possess a mere existence without a spark of the higher life. The Christian ethics and democracy are one in this emphasis of the commonplace, the lame, the passable, the merely existing, the many-too-many. They would be, nay, they are, the masters of human destiny, servants—they whose highest aim is a beggar's paradise, who "ask, and ask anew, how can a man keep on existing best, how can he live longest and most pleasantly."<sup>4</sup> Democracy has millions for reformatories, homes, asylums, and never once inquires whether its exalted spirits live or perish. Comfort, the external conveniences of life, the faint happiness of the greatest number, a mendicant mediocrity, the sacrifice of the truly distinguished for those who know not for what purpose they be, the supermen for slaves—such is for Nietzsche the spirit of our times. Yet in his prophetic exaltation he sees a better time to come. Then supermen will be the glory of the race, and the many will find their reason for existence in cherishing and sustaining the highest types of men. They will recognize the fact that they are properly slaves, without independent thought and initiative, and so properly under the direction of such as can provide form and dignity, ends and purposes, an upward and onward movement for all.

Thus a double standard of morality results, one for supermen, another for those dependent upon their guidance. Manifestly, the virtues of exalted character positing its own law are other than those of obedience to authority. And there can be no hope for supermen if one slave equals one superman. Therefore, while

<sup>4</sup> Also sprach Zarathustra, p. 419.

the latter holds his intelligent will to be the only law, "everything being allowed while nothing is true" (*nichts ist wahr, alles ist erlaubt*), the dependent personality will still cherish the self-denying, sacrificing, pitying, poor-in-spirit service-morality.

Christianity, like democracy, makes the fundamental error of supposing all men to be equal. "Man is man before God, we are all alike,"<sup>5</sup> says the Christian, and the principle is one which brings our philosopher to express himself as never man did before, to my knowledge, in the bitterest tones of derision and contempt for our most cherished hopes and beliefs. All religion he holds to be the fabric of dreams, even as pure philosophy arose from delusion and the failure to see distinctly. The other self appearing in dreams gave rise to the belief in souls and future existence. Cowardice and fear for moral principles started the fiction of rewards and punishments and final judgments. All religious phenomena Nietzsche believes explicable as psychological aberration and reading into experience what is not to be found there. Thus auto-suggestion produces the consciousness both of sin and deliverance from sin and of the efficacy of prayer. For Zarathustra, who is of course Nietzsche himself, God is dead; God, too, was, and is, a delusion. Our philosopher, wandering through the earth, meets in a far-off wood a holy man who is singing praises to God as in loneliness he climbs his mountain-side. He is intoning ancient psalms and muttering to himself. "Can it be," exclaimed Zarathustra, "this old saint has not yet heard in his wood that God is dead?" "Such are despisers of life," he continues, "decaying men, such as have poisoned themselves, and of whom the earth is weary." "I beseech you, my brethren, remain true to earth, and do not believe such as speak of hopes for other worlds. They are poisoners, whether they know it or not."<sup>6</sup> Thus our concerns are confined entirely to earth; and bitterly does our atheist curse those who yearn for other worlds. "May they pass hence, earth is weary of these weaklings; let them have their eternal reward," he cries in derision. "We," he calls to his disciples, of whom there were none at that time, "we shall be satisfied with earth," with its seas and skies and green grass, with its struggles and joys, and, best of all, its glorious end.

<sup>5</sup> Also sprach Zarathustra, p. 417.

<sup>6</sup> Also sprach Zarathustra, p. 12.

Christianity is for Nietzsche the very type of Asiatic despotism, which still holds sway over the minds of men like a blight. Its fabled concepts might, as such, be quite harmless if it were not for the fact that their moral influence is degrading to the personality, inasmuch as they set forth self-denial, self-sacrifice, humiliation, dependence, the delusion of sin, depravity, and the feeble yearning for a world where there shall be a compensation for present weakness and meanness of spirit. He reviles the gentle carpenter's son who taught for the poor in spirit, the halt, the blind, babes and sucklings, and those who long for other worlds. "Strange," he exclaims, "that a crucified Jew these many centuries ago should have made so great a stir in the world." The time will come, Nietzsche maintains, when men will be brave enough to face the fact that our destiny is irretrievably bound up with earth, and that it is futile to hope for heaven, or a resurrection, or the horror of everlasting life, or the justice of a God whom mankind have themselves created. The time will come when man himself, or rather the Superman, will become an object of religion.

This is the religion of the future, of which we hear so much in Germany today. "See, I teach you the Superman," says Nietzsche. "Man is something that must be overcome. What have you done to overcome him? All beings heretofore have created something higher than themselves, and would you be the ebb of this great flood and rather go back to the beast than overcome the human? What is an ape to a man? A derision or a poignant shame. Just that a man should be to the Superman—a derision or a poignant shame." Conversion to this evolutionary religion is a sort of recognition of depravity, for "it is the hour of scorn, the hour in which your fortune becomes despicable, likewise your reason and your virtue. The hour in which you say, 'What is there in my fortune? It is poverty and filth and a beggarly complacency.' The hour in which you say, 'What is there in my reason? Does it demand knowledge as the lion its food? It is poverty and filth and a beggarly complacency.' The hour in which you say, 'What is there to my virtue? It has not yet made me to exult with ecstasy. How weary am I of my Good and my Evil. All that is poverty and filth and beggarly complacency."

cency.' Have ye thus spoken? Have ye thus cried? Ah, that I had heard you crying thus! It is not your sin: it is your self-satisfaction which clamors to the heavens. Where is the lightning that may lick you with its tongue? Where is the inner intoxication with which you may be inoculated? See, I teach you the Superman; he is this lightning, he is this inner intoxication, he is the sense of the earth!"

This is the kind of religion, this the style of its sacred book. Is it a wonder that in our age of transition both the ideas and the fervid diction should have fascinated all young Germany? Before we consider Nietzsche's influence, however, let us examine the ideas more critically, and first of all ask ourselves the question, Upon what basis does the author frame his judgments? Doubtless it will be an interesting surprise to many American and English pragmatists to learn that Nietzsche has anticipated all their principal doctrines. He argues:<sup>7</sup> Formerly one asked how truth might be possible and knowledge attainable; the Sphinx's questions being meanwhile accepted as something original, absolute, and requiring no justification. He proposes to ask the Sphinx a question, namely, "Why answer your questions?" In other words, what is the cause of this desire for truth, and wherein lies the value of it? Why choose "truth" rather than "falsehood," and why not rather the latter than the former? He finds them by no means opposites, since that which makes truth valuable is a quality which may be held in common by falsehood. For the criterion of value requires us to measure judgments from the standpoint of the furtherance and maintenance of life, biologically speaking; and, psychologically, that which produces satisfaction is "true." With the knowledge of things, therefore, the "truth" has nothing to do. Indeed, Nietzsche maintains "that the falsest judgments (among which are synthetic judgments *a priori*) are most indispensable for us; that without granting the validity of logical fictions, or without measuring reality with a fancied world, the 'equal to itself,' the 'absolute,' . . . life under the present conditions would not be possible, that a surrender of false judgments would be a surrender of life, a diminution of life"; and therefore "the falsity of a judgment is no objection to it." Life provides

<sup>7</sup> Vol. vii, pp. 9-22 (1884).

for itself, and chooses the form of knowing which it needs. And thus it is a biological necessity for us to accept the space-time-cause character of our surroundings and the (possibly false) axiom that appearance is correlated with the laws of thought. The concept "truth" is therefore contradictory, since truth cannot extend to the relation of knowing to being, but is necessarily restricted to the relationships of the knowers to one another and to their presentations. In the sense of a correspondence of knowing with reality, there is, then, for Nietzsche no truth. His "truth" becomes Schiller's practical value, utility, James's "what we want," Dewey's psychological satisfaction—that which furthers the life of the individual, the species, the race. What is injurious to life is false for us. And since life for Nietzsche is the "will for power," that which serves the latter is true. Similarly, the test of truth lies in the practical operation of it. "That by which I am thwarted or destroyed is not true for me. It means a false relationship of my being to other things. For there are only individual truths; an absolute relationship is nonsense."<sup>8</sup> Again, he emphasizes the social, linguistic, national, racial elements, which by utility determine the relative truth or falsity of judgments. Truth is a subconscious phenomenon—nothing more.<sup>9</sup> Nor is there need of an absolute truth; it will suffice for life that we believe ourselves in the possession of truth. Life requires illusions: man is not primarily a knowing being; his intellect is but a means for the maintenance of his life.<sup>10</sup>

We may say, therefore, that in so far as Nietzsche was a philosopher, he was a philosopher of culture. His judgments are largely aesthetic, biological, judgments of practical value; and concepts such as the "*Wille zur Macht*," the "*Ewige Wiederkunft*," and other distinctly metaphysical theories seem incorporated in spite of himself. And, doubtless, in questions which are properly pragmatic, the only answer is the testing. So that culture does in reality become largely a function of the will. So far, then, Nietzsche was justified in striving to inspire enthusiasm for his ideal of the Superman. Only history would tell whether or not he were in the right. And criticism, from the very nature of the case, must needs be aesthetic or historical.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. xi, Aphor. 6, 208.<sup>9</sup> Vol. x, p. 185.<sup>10</sup> Vol. x, pp. 161, 186.

With reference, then, to the positing of individuality, the central doctrine in the "*Umwertung aller Werte*," and the desire of Nietzsche to inoculate modern life with more of the Greek spirit, those who are acquainted with its heritage will say that this was a laudable end. Yet he failed to see that his modification of Schopenhauer's Will is quite at variance with Greek form, poise, self-restraint. With all the hundreds of personally striking men, individuals whose influence has spread throughout the world of European culture, I know of none, except perhaps Calicles as presented in Plato's *Gorgias*, who deliberately inflicted his personality upon his times. Among Athenian citizens, where were individual initiative, the liberty of mind and body, and the most favorable conditions the world has yet seen for the free exercise of activity, exulting in physical, intellectual, and artistic pursuits, the result was not the assertion of self, but the exact opposite, the *mesotes*, the happy mean, of Aristotle. Thus we have in Attic life, with all the intensity of that life, not supermen, consciously rejoicing in their strength, every man a would-be exponent of will, determined to assert himself, but rather a constant feeling of self-restraint in conduct, of modesty with reference to knowledge and ability, of form with reference to art.

In a similar way we can prove upon historical grounds that master-and-slave morality, in the sense of license and submission, contains its own disintegrating factors. From the very nature of circumstances, our wills may no more be licensed than our heads may soar above our bodies. Nor have moral principles generally, any more than words and grammar, been the creations of strong wills who said, "Go to." Ethics, like language, is an absurdity when reduced to the individual, apart, of course, from religious presuppositions. The moral genius and the man of letters, great as their influence may be, are not the creators of language, nor of the sense of what is right. Nietzsche erred here through passionate enthusiasm for the Lord and Hero, and his moral liberty is but licensed anarchy. Grant, however, that as fellow-men we share our moral antecedents, and that if we live together we are bound to live as men, just as we communicate by means of common terms, then—stripped of hyperbole—supermen might well become saviours of society.<sup>1</sup> For, spiritually interpreted, this superior man,



by positing ends and ideals, might help to overcome the rabble in the sense of mediocrity, vulgarity, and lust of material power. Dignity of life and institutions, the imperatives of evolution, all the elements which stimulate our aspirations for the higher values of thought and feeling, are largely a function of exalted leadership. That democracy stands in the way of evolution by conditioning these highest individuals is manifestly false where a free field and no favor obtains. Only a democracy in which material ends are the highest good profanes the individual. Two types of supermen should therefore be differentiated. If he whose aim is but to have and to hold is a danger in proportion to his power, he whose aristocracy consists of disinterested and pre-eminent ability is a public boon. Give us such supermen, and let them assume their proper sphere as leaders. Such are, indeed, the only hope against rabble-democracy.

Nietzsche's individual ethics thus becomes a possible school for dignity, if we distinguish rightly between license and liberty, between libertines and lovers. The passionate poet of a higher humanity, arch-foe of weaklings, dependents, and pharisees, spake his Laconian nature in fire which is dangerous to our whole social structure. And yet the fire of this gentlest and kindest of men serves a purpose, if properly directed, on the hearthstone of our inner life. For our moral judgments are as much our own as are the apples of our eyes. And, after all, we are men, not cells; persons, not colonists, without dignity, undifferentiated. Nietzsche's revolt was against the modern volvox type of life, where men are mere cells in the communal lump. He prophesied for personalities, for independent thinkers, for men who feared no law as such, each imagination with its own Atlantis. And such can but add new values to our lives.

The religion of the Superman will need no lengthy discussion. From Nietzsche's moral theory it would not be difficult to surmise that religion, in any phase whatsoever, was necessarily abhorrent to him as a form of slavery to transmitted ideas. So far did his absolute individuality carry him that, like Oscar Wilde, if he discovered his own thoughts held in common by others, he was loath to retain them. Thus arose the defiant atheism which saw in all religious experience a stupendous emotional delusion. With

his positing of the individual, pious men must needs be to him like Don Quixote, who underestimated himself because he had constantly in mind the heroic deeds of the knights of romance. Thus, too, a fabled God whose essence was love and pure altruism, held up as a foil to man's necessarily egoistic actions, gave birth to feelings of shortcomings and distress, with the pangs of conscience and need of salvation. And similarly, if men could have realized that the concept of a being purely unegoistic is absurd (how could an ego act without an ego),—could men have compared themselves one with the other, and not with a thing more fabulous than the phoenix, they would have had a greater respect for themselves. Sin would be no more. And with the elimination of responsibility could but come the philosophic conviction that every act is unconditionally necessary. Thus it was that this prophet of individualism sought to confine the interests of men to earth, and bade them boldly face extinction nor hope for other reward.

But let us for a moment inquire how a "false psychology, a fantastic explanation of motives and experiences," could have seduced and degraded even to pusillanimity a "necessarily egoistic" human nature. How came comparison with others and with the "fabled God" in a race where altruism is but a disease? A "necessarily egoistic" nature must have found it equally necessary to compare itself with others and to adjust itself accordingly, for thence arose, we are told, our altruistic motives, our craving for the higher life beyond. And since our ancestors felt this need of a higher Being for their salvation and inner satisfaction, we have to deal with psychic facts as basic as any egoism. So that the question then becomes, Is the common yearning a disease, or may the isolated self-worship possibly be a form of egomania? "If there were gods, how could I endure it not to be one? Therefore there are none!" is an individualist's argument, based upon at least an exalted opinion of one's self. It was to Nietzsche's inner satisfaction to find in whatever contributed to the "*Wille zur Macht*," to the will of the individual man, nothing but truth; and so whatever conditioned the progress of his assumed Superman must of necessity be false. We need, therefore, fear no evil from his negation of religion. For, manifestly, where fundamen-

tal concepts are not to be decided by approximation with reality, a counter-judgment of value will suffice for our satisfaction. So that we need but to render unto the pragmatist the things which are his to retain our logical self-respect.

A few words will have to suffice with reference to Nietzsche's influence. The sudden expansion of the cult was and is one which well justifies the call of conservative men for "police, colleagues, government authorities." The spread of the theories which I have attempted to describe among the educated classes in Germany and France is comparable only to that of their opposite, socialism, among the third estate. France had, indeed, anticipated the Titan man and his individuality. La Rochefoucauld, long before, deprived Nietzsche of a possible claim to originality, and Renan was as much a hater of the dead level as ever man was. The factors which explain the sudden fashion into which Nietzsche sprang about 1890 are thus very complex. Among them we may note, in the first place, Schopenhauer's fundamental pessimism, crabbed and relentless, softened, indeed, in certain quarters by von Hartmann's rose-water, but generally despairing of any good in civil, educational, religious institutions; a spirit which revolts, to quote Otto Ludwig, against "our time of levelling, when everyone fears to show himself different from the others, when in reality the law of necessity prevails, since from childhood up the passions are deadened, and there are fast-bound arrangements with police on every hand . . . when individual intentions are adjusted to those of the common average man . . . and character shows itself only in its effects." Natural enough, with such a view of affairs, that individuality should seek to avenge itself. And in Germany it had been seeking to do so, according to Karl Lamprecht,<sup>11</sup> for sixty years or more of the "*subjektivistische Periode*." The age of Bismarck, Moltke, blood-and-iron, was culminating, and giving increased zeal to both socialist and Titan-man. Both were, and are, dissatisfied with aught but radical measures. There must be revolutionary readjustments, though the state be removed for the individual (Paul Heyse), or the higher classes be despoiled for the third estate (Karl Marx). The explosive violence and passionate diction of our poet well suited such a time. I think it

<sup>11</sup> Deutsche Geschichte, xi, p. 310.

no exaggeration to say that there are hundreds of young men in Germany today who echo the sentiment of their master, "If there were gods, how could I endure it not to be one?" At the universities, courses of lectures are now devoted to this philosopher. The publications of the *Archiv* at Weimar, in large and expensive editions, are sold in very unusual numbers. In addition to the exhaustive life published by his sister, a dozen men might be named who have written biographical works concerning him. The number of those who have written about his philosophy is legion; and almost without exception these books have been published since 1895. Höffding's and Windelband's Histories of Philosophy—the former published in 1900, the latter in 1891—never so much as mention his name. Yet Friedrich Nietzsche is now the prophet of a new age; *Also sprach Zarathustra* is to be its Bible. "Young Germany" finds the Fatherland in a condition of rapid decay; the new life will be for them the basis of a new culture. A new art, a new state or none, a new faith, a rejuvenation of the native spirit of the people—all these are supposed to be a function of the development of personality. Weinberg, Langbehn, Stephen George, Scharf, Conradi—such are, in varying degrees of intensity, supermen. In the winter of 1905, I attended a series of lectures given by Dr. Ernest Horneffer in Albert Hall, Leipzig. Thousands assembled there to listen to lectures and discussions on Nietzsche, and the meetings lasted usually from eight in the evening till midnight or later. In that hall one night, as the clock was striking twelve, the lecturer sent forth the following challenge, "Let those who no longer find the idea, God, necessary, rise to their feet, and so declare their native dignity as men." The scene which followed was tragic. Perhaps two thousand declared by stamping of feet and shouting and waving of hands that they approved of the speaker's proposition.

In art it would be by no means difficult to show the relation between Richard Strauss's deliberate infliction of unmitigated perversity and Young Germany's "Express thyself unconditionally." Nor can there be another motive, it seems to me, when Max Klinger paints "*Die blaue Stunde*"—a blue seashore, blue rocks, girl-forms by no means beautiful, nude and blue, blue fire;

it is, indeed, the expression of individuality. But we cannot go afield here. Suffice it that by way of example in literature we characterize Ludwig Scharf and his *Lieder eines Menschen*. His battle is against reality; he will have his "Beyond Good and Evil" applied there. He rages against the thousand-year-old prejudice—morality—and insists that the common right of man permits him to enjoy whatever his heart desires—after us the flood! So he is determined with clenched fist to declare the evil of religion, of any cult whatsoever, of any state, of any occupation, of any civilization. He will express himself once for all, and enjoy himself. We can hear plainly enough the cause of all this bitterness and revolt. If it had been possible for him, for his pure ego and for no one else, to sit comfortably in his chariot and be drawn in triumph by his contemporaries, if his individuality could but have been recognized, all would have been otherwise. And it is not difficult to see that it is only his tragic want of energy which conditions his practical exemplification of the Superman. And Scharf feels it plainly enough, but he *will* not know it, he *will* not admit it. *Ab uno disce ceteros*.

Max Nordau considers all this one of twenty-five or more insanities; Raoul Richter, clear-headed professor of philosophy at Leipzig, finds Nietzsche the Dionysiac embodiment of a coming *Weltanschauung*; Doctor Rudolf Eisler, of Vienna, sees in him a naturalistic pantheist, who might well be the John the Baptist for a voluntaristic panentheist; Arthur Moeller-Bruck speaks of him as the *candāla* Nietzsche; Professor Karl Lamprecht recognizes in him the culmination of the Carlyle-Emerson hero-worship, the destruction of pessimism by joyful affirmation of this life and of creative will, the turning-point to a new religion of yearning for higher values and eternal life through the course of nature and will. As for us, when this age of transition is past, let us hope that there may be more religion, less individuality, greater consistency, and, if possible, greater love of the beautiful, than are found in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche.